

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023 7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Bancroft, Lencioni, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Heather McGuire, City Administrator; Russell Colby, Director of Community Development; Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development; Monica Hawk, Development Engineer; Rachel Hitzemann, City Planner; Allen Fennell, Building & Code Enforcement Manager; Peter Suhr, Director of Public Works; Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Christensen

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened by Chair Bancroft at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALLED

Roll was called:

Present: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Bancroft, Lencioni, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

Absent: None

3. OMNIBUS VOTE

- *4c. Recommendation to Approve Professional Services Agreement with Serena Sturm for Construction Administration Phase of First Street Plaza Project

Ald. Wirball made a motion to approve omnibus item *4c on the agenda. Seconded by Ald. Pietryla.

Roll was called:

Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Bongard, Muenz, Lencioni, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

Absent:

Nays:

Recused:

Motion passed 9-0

4. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Bancroft noted there was an agenda item addition for a project update from the River Corridor Foundation.

John Rabchuk presented an update on the Eastbank Enhancement Project. The River Corridor Foundation identified an area on the riverfront from Illinois Street on the north to the Piano Factory bridge on the south that could use some enhancements. There are some esthetic, congestion and bike path issues along this area. The Foundation is providing funding for the development of a concept plan that would provide for those enhancements. They expect to have two firm concepts and rough cost estimates by September 1st.

Ald. Lencioni expressed his appreciation for the team taking the initiative to help push the City forward.

Chair Bancroft complimented the strategy of taking the project segment by segment.

- a. Recommendation to Approve Summer 2023 Outdoor Dining Plan for First Street Plaza East

Ald. Wirball made a motion to approve the Summer 2023 Outdoor Dining Plan for First Street Plaza East and waive the permit fees for the first period of 100 days, and have staff provide a progress report on the project prior to the next 100-day period. Seconded by Ald. Pietryla.

Ald. Lencioni said they need permanent plans so it doesn't become a political issue where they are making policy by approving temporary plans.

Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development, said they have started working on a permanent solution and have met with some of the restaurants in the area. They hope to bring forward their ideas for a permanent plan this summer. He explained the rationale behind waiving the fees for both permitting periods was due to the limited access to the restaurants caused by the construction work in the area.

Chair Bancroft asked if staff had an opinion on splitting this into two 100-day periods. Would it cause any administrative issues?

Ms. McGuire said there wouldn't be any issues administratively. They won't know what the day-to-day/week-to-week construction season is going to bring. It might be hit-or-miss even when there isn't construction going on due to dust and debris that might be blowing around that may not make it feasible for restaurants to offer outdoor dining. There was no rationale between splitting it for the two 100-day periods or doing it for the entire season.

Ald. Weber said it's the fairest way to go about it for this season.

Ald. Bessner agreed and felt they can revisit it later.

Ald. Pietryla asked if the chain link fence on the West side would eventually become a solid barrier. Mr. Conley said the plan is to keep it as a chain link fence. He noted the First Street businesses brought it up as a concern and Staff is open to reviewing it if it becomes a problem.

Ald. Lencioni asked if there was any feedback regarding the construction project from those seeking these permits. Mr. Conley said they have been fairly receptive. The big concern is signage and Staff is working on a plan to include more signage.

Ald. Wirball requested Staff to provide a regular update related to how the evening and Saturday construction work is impacting the area restaurants.

Ald. Foulkes asked if the restaurants have any serious worries about what is happening. Mr. Conley said overall, they were comfortable. They knew there would be some disruptions this year.

Roll was called on Motion:

Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Muenz, Lencioni, Pietryla, Wirball, Bessner, Weber

Absent:

Nays:

Recused: Bongard

Motion passed 8-0

- b. Recommendation to Approve Summer 2023 Outdoor Dining Plan for First Street Plaza West

Ald. Wirball made a motion to approve the Summer 2023 Outdoor Dining Plan for First Street Plaza West and waive the permit fees for the first period of 100 days, and have staff provide a progress report on the project prior to the next 100-day period. Seconded by Ald. Pietryla.

Ald. Bongard asked what Ald. Wirball was looking for in a progress report from the businesses that would allow him to feel comfortable reimplementing the fees. Ald. Wirball would like their feedback after 100 days to see what progress has been made. It's not just up to the businesses. Since it's public space it is up to council members to make that determination. Ald. Foulkes asked if it's more the businesses or more the construction company saying they are done and cleaned-up. He's not sure he wants to rely fully on the businesses if the construction company thinks they still have work to do. Ald. Wirball said it's a combination of both.

Ald. Bancroft understood the waiver of the fees to be purely related to the disruption that may or may not happen to the businesses and their outdoor dining facilities. If they are not experiencing interruptions and there are no complaints, regardless of the status of construction, in theory the reason for the waiver would not be necessary and they may want to reinstitute it during the second 100 days. Ald. Wirball said that is correct.

Ald. Bongard asked if they would be raising the rates next year when the project is done. Mr. Conley said that would be part of the discussion when they bring forward the permanent outdoor dining plan.

Ald. Bongard asked if businesses do better during construction season. Bob Rasmussen, business owner, said it's not necessarily during construction season, but revenue increases about 100% going forward on a weekly basis from May 1st until Labor Day. He noted the biggest challenge at the moment is access to the area. The fear is that people will come once or twice to see how difficult it is and they may not come back.

Ald. Bongard said he doesn't want to play a game with the businesses. The City is making an investment down there and if they can get through six months and say that's the extent of it, knowing next year it's going to be more costly to be operating, he doesn't see the value in revisiting this in 90 days on the off chance somebody says they had a good few weeks. They should waive the fees for the whole year and push through this because they don't know what that impact is going to be. Ald. Wirball says they won't know what the schedule is going to be and if there is any hesitation they can waive them again. He believes it's about fairness to others who are paying sidewalk café permit fees. If the project is done early, those on the east side may ask why those on the west side aren't paying fees when they are. He feels it's a more measured and balanced approach. From a staff perspective, Ms. McGuire said she would like to keep the west and the east with some parity. If they are going to revisit one within 100 days, she would like to revisit both.

Ald. Bongard asked if there was a reason why they didn't take the approach of splitting up the season. Mr. Conley felt the construction was expected to go until November and they thought it was reasonable that the whole season could be waived.

Ald. Bessner said part of the original presentation to the restaurateurs down there was that they were going to face disruptions for the whole season. He felt the waiver should apply for the entire season.

Ald. Bancroft confirmed that there are no administrative issues and that staff will put this on the to-do list for committee/council to review in time for the next 100 days. Ms. McGuire acknowledged this is correct.

Roll was called on the Motion.

Ayes: Silkaitis, Foulkes, Muenz, Pietryla, Wirball, Weber

Absent:

Nays: Bongard, Bessner

Recused: Lencioni

Motion passed 6-2

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Anderson, resident, presented a suggestion for consideration to help with pedestrian traffic for the duration of the construction project. He suggested blocking off a westbound lane of Illinois Street from First Street to Riverside as a pedestrian walkway.

6. ADDITIONAL ITEMS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

None

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ald. Wirball made a motion to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Seconded by Ald. Bessner. Approved unanimously by voice vote. Motion Carried.